

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1584
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2001
AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR NON FARMING USE
V. SAROJA

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware that conversion of agricultural and for non- farm use has increased in recent years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the details of guidelines issued by the Union Government to State Governments to protect the agricultural land being diverted to non-farm use; and
- (d) if so, the steps the Government are taking to encourage the interest of Indian farmers to grow foodgrains in their fields?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SRIPAD Y. NAIK)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir, the Government are aware of the conversion of agricultural land for non-farm use. So far as net sown area is concerned the land use classification data indicate that it has increased from 140.27 million hectare in 1970-71 to 142.82 million hectare in 1996-97. Therefore, the net sown area has increased by 2.55 million hectare in last three decades, the barren & unculturable land and culturable wastelands have declined. It implies, therefore, that even if some agricultural land has been diverted into non-agricultural uses, a larger area has been brought under cultivation through reclamation of wastelands and other degraded land, thereby, increasing net sown area.

(c): Land is a State subject and, therefore, a 19-Point National Land Use Policy Outline (NLPO) has been circulated to all State Governments for implementation. One of the points in NLPO stresses on the need to control the diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.

(d): Government of India have taken steps to supplement the efforts of the State Governments to develop the degraded lands to put them into productive use through Centrally Sponsored Schemes, namely, National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA), Soil Conservation in the catchments of River Valley Projects (RVP) and Flood Prone Rivers (FPR); Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), Reclamation of Alkali Soil (Usar land) and Externally Aided Projects.